



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 16, 2010

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U.S. SENATORS: IT'S TIME TO VOTE ON NEW START

Delaying the treaty would damage national security and put America at unnecessary risk

Washington, DC – A group of United States Senators, all members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, called on the U.S. Senate to consider and ratify the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty ("New START") in the current Congressional session. The Senators cited critical national security concerns in delaying consideration of the treaty and warned of the consequences to America's nuclear security efforts around the globe.

"It has been almost a year since there were inspectors on the ground in Russia, and that has been a year too long," said **Senator Benjamin L. Cardin**. "The Senate can move our national security agenda forward while showing that we can transcend politics as usual by supporting New START. Clearly, we need to join together to keep our nation secure."

"Delaying a vote on the New START Treaty into next year is a dangerous and unnecessary gamble with our nation's security," said **Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH)**. "Failing to ratify New START tells the world we are not serious about the nuclear threat and undermines America's ability to respond to the dangerous challenges before us. We simply cannot afford to wait any longer to address the threats posed by a nuclear Iran and by terrorists around the world seeking nuclear materials."

"Without ratification of New START, we have not been able to fully verify the Russian nuclear program for more than 300 days. Every day that passes reduces our understanding of the Russian nuclear arsenal. Without this treaty, we are less secure," said **Senator Bob Casey (D-PA)**. "The national security establishment has spoken. The experts, many from Republican administrations, have spoken. The American people have spoken. New START is in the core national security interests of our country, and the time has come to vote. The Senate should vote on this treaty before the end of the year."

"The New START Treaty is crucial to our national security and our ability to prevent the spread of dangerous nuclear weapons," said **Senator Chris Dodd (D-CT)**. "If the Senate is not able to move forward on this treaty, our country will be left vulnerable. At this moment in history, it is time to put aside partisan politics to defend our national security and pass the New START treaty now."

“The Senate should immediately ratify the New START Treaty because it will enhance the security of the United States,” **said Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA)**. “Not only will it lead to a reduction in nuclear weapons, but it will allow U.S. weapons inspectors to return to Russia to monitor their nuclear program and verify compliance with the Treaty.”

“The most dangerous threat to America and to the world is for a terrorist organization or network to obtain a nuclear weapon. Nuclear disarmament is among the most critical steps we must take to keep our nation and future generations safe,” **said Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY)**. “Ratification of the New START treaty would reduce the number of nuclear weapons in the American and Russian arsenals, bolstering our national security by reducing the risk of loose nuclear weapons and materials falling into the hands of hostile nations or terrorist groups.”

In September 2010, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee passed the New START Treaty by a strong and bipartisan 14-4 decision. The Committee thoroughly examined the treaty in conducting 12 open and classified hearings, featuring more than 20 expert witnesses.

The treaty has earned the unanimous backing of America’s military leadership, including the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, the commander of our nation’s strategic forces, and the director of the Missile Defense Agency. America’s military was joined in their support by six former secretaries of state, five former secretaries of defense, the chair and vice chair of the 9/11 Commission, and seven former commanders of U.S. Strategic Command. National security experts from both parties and from seven former presidential administrations urged the Senate to approve this treaty.

Since the previous START Treaty expired last December, the United States has been unable to inspect Russia’s nuclear arsenal and obtain vital intelligence for American military planners. The New START Treaty would allow these critical inspections to resume and would make sure that the U.S. can – in the words of former President Ronald Reagan – “Trust, but verify” Russia’s nuclear commitments.

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